The Dewan then opened the session with the following

ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN,

Once more I have the honour and the privilege, under the gracious command of Her Highness the Maharani Regent, to welcome you as cordially to this session, as I welcomed you to the last session of the Assembly. I was unavoidably called away for two months during the year, during which period Rao Bahadur R. Krishna Pillai, the Devaswom Commissioner, held office as Dewan. For the rest, I am responsible for the year's administration. I shall endeavour to indicate the general trend of affairs and shall point to the more important measures that were attempted and effected since we last met.

2. The results of the year's activities are set out in the Administration Report which has today been placed in your hands. Although the form of the book and the manner of presentation of the facts it embodies have been somewhat changed and although the statistical tables have been relegated to a more appropriate volume, I think you will find that the present report gives you all the information you may require.

3. **Action on Representations.**—I have heard the insinuation that the Government do not pay much heed to the representations put up at this Assembly and that greater attention is devoted to matters pressed upon the authorities in another House. That is unfair. Those of you who assisted me at the last session of this Assembly may remember that I took care to explain the position, the intentions and the difficulties of the Government as fully as I possibly could in relation to each representation. The disposal of the questions raised and of the requests preferred did not end with the session. During the year that has elapsed, Heads of Departments, District Officers and Secretaries have been unremitting in their efforts to enable the Government to meet your wishes. Their toil has not been in vain; and you will see from the statement which I have had prepared and which has been furnished to each of you, that a considerable number of representations remaining over from the last session have since been settled. Others are in the course of disposal; and where the Government have found themselves unfortunately precluded from complying with your requests, believe me it was only after anxious consideration that, for good and sufficient reason, a negative answer has had to be returned. Rest assured that every single representation is examined.

4. **The Ruling Family.**—An occurrence of great joy to all in the State was the birth, on the 23rd of October, 1926, of a daughter to Her Highness the Maharani Regent. That one more Princess should take her place in the Ruling Family brought real pleasure to the people of Travancore.

An event of much importance which took place the other day was the *Tirumadampu* ceremony of His Highness the Maharaja. The investiture of His Highness with the sacred thread has significations of deep import, both spiritual and temporal. As such, the occasion was celebrated with pomp and circumstance befitting His Highness's position and with all those solemn rites so devoutly observed by our deeply religious Ruling House. His Highness has made marked progress in his education and the devoted attention and fostering care bestowed upon the guidance of his studies by the Maharani-mother and by his tutors were responded to in a manner which has evoked the high commendation of all who have come in contact with our future Ruler.

5. **Season and Trade.**—The rainfall during the earlier part of the year was good and the harvest satisfactorily reflected favourable seasonal conditions. But latterly an insufficient and belated north-east monsoon had depressing effects upon the Kumbham rice crop, especially in South Travancore. Our principal industry, cocoanut cultivation, made a good recovery during the year and the trade in the products of the palm showed on the whole an advance notwithstanding slight set-backs in certain of its commodities mainly due to competitive disadvantages. To remedy

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these, certain imposts have recently been lightened and it is hoped that our producers will now be able to trade on better terms. Pepper did not command as high prices as it did during the year 1101 ; but, nevertheless, the prices realised were well above the average. During the year 1101, our external trade rose by about Rs. 78 lakhs to Rs. 16 crores and the balance of trade was very much in our favour since 63 per cent. represented exports. There are indications that the external trade during the current year will show a further advance.

6. Finance.—Turning to public finance, the last year yielded in revenue and receipts nearly Rs. 2,22,00,000. This was Rs. 11 lakhs more than in the previous year. Expenditure, on the other hand, was about Rs. 1,99,00,000 or less than that of the previous year by something over Rs. 1 lakh. The net result was a general surplus for the year of over Rs. 23 lakhs, the best the State balance sheet has ever shown. The increase in revenue was well distributed among the various departments, the Land Revenue and the Excise Departments taking the lead. Until recently, realisations from the sale of Government lands were included in ordinary land revenue receipts. As a matter of fact, such receipts properly belong to capital and from this year forward are being classified as such and separately exhibited.

7. Assets and Liabilities.—The assets of the State at the close of the year came to about Rs. 2,52,60,000, something like Rs. 44 lakhs more than when the year opened. Against this must be set off as liabilities Rs. 1,49,23,000, the corresponding amount for 1100 being Rs. 1,23,00,000, showing a closing credit balance of Rs. 1,03,37,000. The growth of liabilities was due to larger deposits in savings banks. Our surplus investments were thus distributed:

in Government of India Securities ... Rs. 1,08,43,000 ;
and in fixed deposits with banks ... Rs. 28,50,000.

The interest from these sources increased by Rs. 2,60,000 and special care was devoted to the selection of investments. These investments yielded nearly six per cent. per annum. What is paid out on savings bank deposits is at the rate of four per cent. per annum. Our sinking funds amounting to Rs. 44,53,000 are also held in Government of India Securities.

8. Land Revenue.—The most important reform connected with the land revenue administration was the abolition of taxation in kind on *Kandukrishi paattam* lands. The hardships of the tenants resulting from the antiquated system of payment of tax in paddy have formed the subject of representation in this Assembly almost from its foundation. The control and management of these Crown lands has long and of set purpose been vested in the ordinary land revenue administration of the State ; and the rents collected are merged in general revenues. In reality, the change is one in mode of realisation. I am in hopes of being able to give effect to the change by the 1st Minam 1102. This reform, which happily synchronised with the birth of a Princess to Her Highness the Maharani Regent, was also accompanied by the commutation into money of the tax in kind on the *Sreepadam* lands.

9. Lands for Depressed Classes.—The total area of land registered in the names of members of depressed classes during the year 1101 was 523 acres against 394 acres in 1100. Of this, an extent of 330 acres was from the 16,012 acres earmarked in the various taluks for assignment to the depressed classes on concessional terms and 193 acres from outside that area. The total area assigned to these landless classes up to the end of the year was 2,995 acres. On the suggestion of the Land Revenue Commissioner, the Protector of Depressed Classes has been authorised to inspect, in conjunction with the Tahsildar of each taluk, lands earmarked for assignment on concessional terms to the depressed classes with a view to excluding from the list unsuitable lands and to substituting suitable lands if available. The Government have under consideration the question of enlarging the powers and functions of the Protector and increasing the scope and usefulness of his work. The need for a whole time Protector is also being looked into.

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